

Common Language Between Substance Abuse and Violence Against Women

Common Topic	Substance Abuse	Abused Women	Abusers
Person needing help	Recovering alcoholic or drug abuser	Survivor/Victim	Non-abusive/Non-coercive
Goal of treatment	Recovery from alcohol or drug addiction	Attaining safety/healing from effects of abuse	Accepting responsibility for choice to be violent
Form of treatment or intervention	Treatment from in-patient, out-patient, or hospital setting	Provision of information and support with goal of safety and empowerment – possible groups	Intervention with accountability Provision of information to support choice of non-violence
Help/support	Self-help	Peer support	Legal and social accountability Peer accountability
Core issue for client to accept	Powerlessness	Empowerment	Abuse of Power
Model	Medical model (individual is sick)	Socio-political model (society is sick)	Socio-political model (society is sick)
Locus of change	Social service mission (individual change)	Social change mission (societal change)	Social change mission (societal change)
Role of control	Loses control over substances	Is controlled by partner's use of violence and coercion	Selective use of violence to maintain control
Family function	Family as dysfunctional	Family engaging in adaptive strategies to protect themselves	Battering is functional – the batterer gets what he wants
Type of behavior	Enabling	Protecting self from harmful consequences	
	Co-dependent / Co-alcoholic	Socialized female behavior Adaptive survival strategies	
Impediment to change	Addicted to substance	Trapped in relationship by fear and lack of support	Intentional behavior supported by attitudes of male privilege and lack of accountability
Relapse	Relapse is a part of recovery process	Leaving and returning is part of the safety process	Reverting to violence – is a crime
Escalation of problem	Increased physiological tolerance to substance	Coping/managing and surviving in midst of danger and fear	Social tolerance of battering contributes to abuser's choice to escalate violence

Adapted from: Theresa Zubretsky, New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence.
<http://www.samhsa.gov/preventionpathways>